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ABSTRACT

Teacher educators must begin a process of re-education to gain insights necessary to teach about teaching from a feminist perspective. According to a feminist world view, society is dominated by a patriarchal system which perpetuates the subservience of women. Traditional educational theory, influenced by Freud, Erickson, Piaget, and Kohlberg, supports this masculine bias. It is critical to change the socially ingrained attitudes of education professors and administrators, through such techniques as consciousness raising. Nonsexist materials can be used effectively in education classes, although concepts in these materials can sometimes meet with resistance from both male and female students. Small group exercises encourage attitude change through the sharing of perceptions and values with peers. Sex equity is a relatively new issue, and proponents face practical, philosophical, and attitudinal barriers that accompany any change process. Teacher educators can begin by talking among themselves in a nonthreatening and accepting manner. (FG)

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APPLYING A THEORY OF FEMINIST PSYCHOLOGY

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We are women and teachers of educational psychology. To quote Carolyn Allen, "no pedagogical monolith keeps watch over feminist classrooms" (1981 p. 1). The question for us then is how do we teach about teaching from our feminist perspective?

In order to better understand our feminist perspective you must understand our world view. We do believe that we live in a white male dominant society. We do believe that sex-role stereotypes are perpetuated prior to birth when both expectant parents prefer their first child to be a boy. From the pink or blue nursery to the TV commercial where the father of the newborn boy brings a football to the hospital to "his" and "her" dolls, G.I. Joe "action figures" for him and Barbie dolls for her to sex-typed readers in the first grade and the study of "mankind" in fifth grade social studies, childhood is an intense period of training for both girls and boys for the real world of "MEN"!

This childhood training is very different for girls and boys. Pogrebin (1980) found children assimilating sex-role stereotypes from preschool through college and the first rule they internalize is that "Boys are better - therefore males are meant to be powerful; or males have power, therefore boys are better" (Pogrebin p. 38). Among many other rules about sex-role stereotypes that children internalize according to Pogrebin is "Rule #7: Girls are meant to be mothers - therefore women need men to fulfill themselves." (Pogrebin, p. 45).

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These two messages - male supremacy and compulsory motherhood - are the hidden agenda of the patriarchal system in which we live. Men are in charge of the family and some men are expected to be in charge of other men (and women) in business, education, government and on the athletic fields. Boys must be trained to be autonomous, and competitive so that as men they can assume their rightful leadership role and exercise power. Girls must be trained to grow into women who depend upon and admire men who have power and to believe that they cannot control their own or anyone's else destiny.

Pogrebin (1980) states that "for this gender arrangement to come into being, girls must learn to see themselves as sexual entities after puberty and be motivated to be mothers after marriage"(p. 37). When a girl is taken in by the definition of herself as Mother, legitimized by marriage, male supremacy reigns supreme. The sex-role game is a deadly one but children learn the rules in childhood: he is to grow up to be president, she is to grow up and have a baby.

What's wrong with these stereotypes? Of course, it's alright for a girl to want to grow up and have a baby, but under patriarchal rules that is the only woman a girl is supposed to become. There's nothing wrong with a boy growing up to be president of the country or a corporation but 99 boys out of every 100 will not achieve that pinnacle with the result that most men and boys feel a sense of failure in their "masculinity" which allows them to express their male supremacy in the only way that is available to most men: superiority over women. (Pogrebin p. 37)

Now with our world view secured let's move ahead and examine our theoretical views.

The influences of Sigmund Freud and Erik Erikson have been profound in American Psychology since the 1940's and those of us who teach educational psychology have stood in front of classes year after year lecturing about the Oedipal conflicts (Oedipus was male) and Eriksons' "Eight Stage of Man" without ever pointing out to students the male supremacy view of psychoanalytic theory. Perhaps, because many of us as women were not aware of the masculine bias due to our own socialization as women, we thought that this was the way it supposed to be!

Carol Gilligan (1982) writing about Sigmund Freud states: "after trying to fit women into his masculine conception, seeing them as envying that which they missed, he came instead to acknowledge, in the strength and persistence of women's pre-Oedipal attachments to their mothers, a developmental difference. He considered this difference in women's development to be responsible for what he saw as women's developmental failure" (p. 6).

It is safe to say that psychoanalytic theory and most of its practitioners, historically and currently, view women as being "less than men". Many therapists when treating women and men reinforce the sex-role stereotypes for both genders by expecting and accepting expressions of dependency, nurturance and emotionality from women and reinforcing men for expressions of power achievement and leadership (Rawlings and Carter, 1977).

Erik Erikson's theory is clearly a theory for males. We can assume that both genders would profit from a well-developed sense of trust but after this initial stage girls become invisible.

This society does not train girls for autonomy-only boys are so trained. Autonomy is a key issue in the psychology of men. Relationships are key to the psychology of women (Gilligan, 1982). Girls are kept physically and psychologically closer to the family and through this process become embedded in relationships which become inherent in their thinking and behavior (Gilligan, 1982).

Erikson was also clear that the identity quest was just for men since, in his view for a woman "anatomy was destiny" and her identity would be complete after she had selected the man who would impregnate her.

Piaget and Kohlberg are also theorists with strong masculine biases. When testing groups other than his original sample of males, Kohlberg found that most women score at level 3, which is an interpersonal stage, where according to Kohlberg, moral decisions are based on caring how others think and feel. Level 4, where Kohlberg found most men scored is a law and order stage where moral decisions are based on upholding the rules and abiding by the principles of law and order. Kohlberg's finding led Gilligan (1982) to state: "Prominent among those who thus appear to be deficient in moral development when measured by Kohlberg's scale are women, where judgment seem to exemplify the third stage of his six-stage sequence" (p. 18).

We could go on and on but hopefully we have made our point about the patriarchy and how traditional pedagogy supports it.

What then is the basis for feminist pedagogy? One word "Equality", is the indicator, but how does that happen?

Sexism is a large part of the hidden curriculum in schools along with the other issues, ie. racism, elitism, ageism, and handicappism. Most teachers perceive boys and girls as "significantly different" before they take a seat in their classroom (Wise, 1978). As teachers of educational psychology what is our input into teachers' sex-role ideology? Is it what we want it to be? How can we teach equality?

There are no easy answers to these questions but we're going to try. It is critical in our opinion that we start with the professors' attitudes first. Both male and female professors have been reared in a sexist society and have internalized sexist norms. Therefore, we cannot properly teach from a non-sexist position. We must first re-educate ourselves. This is a most difficult task, changing ingrained attitudes. But it is not an impossible one. It appears to us that the best place to start is with consciousness-raising groups used so effectively in the 60's and 70's by womens' liberation groups. Mandating attendance at such groups for staff, as part of inservice training might be unwise after the group meets for a few times, but we suspect that enough faculty would be willing to attend if supported by the administration, philosophically and practically. If the administration would demonstrate its backing of a non-sexist value system by structuring sessions conveniently and on "company time", and reward attendance in whatever way it generally rewards desired faculty behavior, a giant step towards the effecient functioning of these consciousness raising groups would have been taken. Expectations for progress should be realistic, and much time given for even small changes to occur.

Being academics, we must also advocate the intellectual approach, studying about the issue; although being educational psychologists we realize the low power of such an approach in changing attitudes. We recommend lectures, films, and discussion sessions for the Education professors to acquaint them with the mass of data available in the area of sexism, and the much smaller quantity of non-sexist materials on teaching.

Any of you who have tried to be a non-sexist instructor with beginning undergraduates may have been surprised at the resistance from the students, both male and female. Yet, if we are realistic we know that today's undergraduates are the products of the sexist American public schools. The goal of increasing their awareness can undoubtedly be accomplished in many different ways. Given the fact that most Educational Psychology texts as well as Human Development texts tend to be sexist, students need to know from the beginning of the course that the material covered in their textbook is about men and that the instructor will provide material, whenever and wherever possible about women. One can anticipate the howls of rage with which such information will be received given the undergraduates' need to rely on the textbook as the one and only source of reliable information.

Films, such as "Men's Lives" and "Growing Up Female" are certainly appropriate for Educational Psychology or Human Development Classes. Films such as these two need time for discussion, preferably in smaller groups. However, in large undergraduate classes, small groups may be hard to arrange, so that students may have to turn around and talk to the people immediately behind them.

Once initial consciousness has been raised then activities that students can find fun as well as insightful include checking out the toy stores or departments for "girls' toys" and "boy toys," looking at magazine ads and actually putting together a collection, monitoring TV ads for women and men's activities and the spaces where these activities occur, i.e., kitchen and bathroom for women, and outdoors for men.

Small group exercises like those on Sexism in Colangelo's workbook, The Human Relations Experience are excellent if students are able to work with each other in small groups regularly over a period of time. These exercises and others can be done by oneself but we feel the learning comes from sharing perceptions, attitudes and values with peers.

It is not our intent to provide a compendium of activities to raise student awareness about sexism. We have described activities and materials that we have used and to which students have been receptive. We are open to suggestions and hope that you will share your ideas with us.

We recognize the difficulties inherent in teaching equality for men and women in today's world. Philosophically, mainstream America has not accepted the premise that men and women are truly equal, and should be treated that way. We do not all agree on what we mean by equal, or how to treat each other equally. Sex equity in a relatively new term, actually unknown in educational circles ten years ago. While many people perceive sex equity as a women's issue we believe that sex bias in education and society is harmful and damaging to both girls and boys as well as women and men. Since teachers, parents, and school officials are all part of "mainstream

America", it is going to be an uphill struggle to have the goals of a feminist pedagogy, even when clearly articulated, widely accepted. Change of any sort is hard to implement, but change that the majority of people involved do not agree with, and only give lip service to, is more difficult.

The entire change process, teaching from a feminist stance, faces practical as well as philosophical and attitudinal barriers. Non-sexist textbooks and teaching materials are rare, and must be developed. Re-education of the public is a huge task that we have barely begun. But, for the purposes of this meeting - we must face up to the difficulties we know exist in our own profession. We must begin to re-educate ourselves, the trainers of future teachers. Perhaps the place to start is to begin talking among ourselves, to encourage our own "consciousness - raising groups" in a non-threatening, accepting manner. It seems to us that MATEP as an organization can provide such a vehicle for change if we so choose.

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